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Ministry of Advanced Education

NEW MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEGREE GETS GREEN LIGHT

BURNABY – A new mechanical engineering degree program will be offered at the B.C. Institute of Technology, expanding opportunities for students and preparing for predicted demands for more engineers in B.C.'s booming economy, Burnaby-Willingdon MLA John Nuraney announced today.

"This new degree will allow students to build on BCIT's existing diploma program in mechanical engineering technology, while also attracting transfer students from other technical institutes across Western Canada," said Nuraney. "With our strong economy, the 2010 Olympics, and growing population, I know BCIT's mechanical engineers will have their pick of jobs."

According to the most current report by the Canadian Occupational Projection System, almost 5,100 engineering jobs are expected to open up in B.C. between 2005 and 2015, including 1,150 in mechanical engineering. This is a growth rate of three per cent per year, which is much higher than the provincial average. Graduates of the new program are likely to find jobs in forestry, pulp and paper, mining, oil and gas processing and power generation and transmission.

"Our degree authorization process – together with our expansion of the public post-secondary education system – is helping meet the emerging needs of B.C.'s students and workplaces," said Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell. "This new degree at BCIT is an example of the right program at the right place at the right time."

Under B.C.'s degree quality assessment process, new degrees at public and private post-secondary institutions in the province must meet established criteria and be approved by the Minister of Advanced Education. The process includes a 30-day peer-review period for degrees proposed by public post-secondary institutions.

"What makes BCIT programs different is that we focus on practical application and development of job-ready skills," said Tony Knowles, president of BCIT. "Our students are given hands-on experience that challenges their critical thinking skills."

Since the Degree Authorization Act came into force in 2003, more than 100 undergraduate and graduate degrees have been approved. The act is helping B.C. improve its competitiveness and productivity through education and skills training, part of government's Pacific Leadership Agenda.

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